



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

"LAST WORDS!" - 2 TIMOTHY 4:10-11

COLORADO

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Paul labored for more than 30 year proclaiming the good news of salvation found in Jesus Christ alone and bore the brand marks of a servant of Christ. (Galatians 6:17) As he sat in a cold Roman dungeon, waiting for his execution, Paul's thoughts and prayers were directed to his son in the faith, Timothy and the church Timothy pastored in Ephesus.

Paul left Timothy there to carry on the work of ministry, but Timothy was heavy on Paul's heart. Paul had one last letter to write his disciple reminding him of crucial matters in ministry. There is urgency to Paul's message that while others quit, you must remain faithful to fulfill the ministry that God has given you. Paul was concerned for Timothy in this difficult time with some challenging issues in the church. You, Timothy must be faithful in spite of hardship, to guard the treasure of the Gospel you have been entrusted with and faithfully live, preach and proclaim it to a lost and dying world. So he pens this last letter from his cold dark cell.

I. "LAST WORDS!" - 2 TIMOTHY 4:10-11A

(9) "Make every effort to come to me soon; (10) for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia. (11) Only Luke is with me..."

2 Timothy 4:9-11a

Timothy was dearly loved by Paul as a son. Nearly five years had passed since Paul left him in Ephesus. There is such intimacy expressed in Paul's words. Paul had such a concern and devotion for Timothy. Concern because Paul was passing the baton to Timothy to carry out the work of ministry to a new generation and he knew what lay ahead for him.

Also, Paul saw that Timothy was being pressed with hardship, persecution, and difficulties in the church and Timothy was young. He didn't want to see Timothy have any cause to shrink back from fulfilling the ministry to which he was called. So, Paul expresses the love and affection he has for Timothy throughout this letter and now in his closing words. He longed for the companionship of Timothy and so urges him to come quickly. Paul says "make every effort", make haste, and exert every energy to come quickly. The journey that was required of Timothy could take 4-6 months.

Then by contrast, Paul mentions Demas. As we saw in our last study Demas was seduced from his love for Jesus Christ and having broken with Paul, he went on to Thessalonica. As the risk increased during Paul's second imprisonment within the Mamartine Prison in Rome, clearly Demas' resolve decreased because he came to love this present world more than the Lord, the Lord's work or Paul. We don't know what happened but we know Demas deserted him in a time of great need and this brought tremendous disappointment and anguish

to Paul.¹ His desertion should serve as a warning to us.¹ Corinthians 10:12 reminds us that, "Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."²

A. "CRESCENS HAS GONE TO GALATIA" - 2 TIMOTHY 4:10B

This is the only place Crescens' name is mentioned in the Bible. It appears he had Paul's blessing in leaving and was sent on a mission to Galatia and not a desertion. Galatia was across the Aegean Sea. Though Crescens and Titus had gone out for the sake of the gospel from Paul in Rome, their absence was seriously felt by him in these last, difficult days of his life.

We may not know much of anything about Crescens' life, but this we do know: there are many unknown people whose lives of faithfulness to the Lord are unknown to the world... *but known to Christ!*

B. "TITUS TO DALMATIA" - 2 TIMOTHY 4:10C

Titus is a name we have seen before and is no stranger. We find Paul leaving Titus in Crete on his way to Rome while under guard. (Acts 27:12) In Paul's letter to Titus we discover that he was placed in Crete to set right what was left undone. "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you." (Titus 1:5)

In Paul's letter to Titus we see how close Paul was to him. He writes this in Titus 1:4, "to Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior." Paul calls Titus his true son, speaking of him as an exemplary friend and gospel partner. This letter was written several years after 1 Timothy and a year or so before 2 Timothy.

Titus is also mentioned 9 times in 2 Corinthians and twice in Galatians. Here we see Paul sent Titus to Dalmatia mentioned in Romans 15:19, located north of Macedonia directly east across the Adriatic Sea from Italy. This area is known today as modern Yugoslavia. No doubt Titus was sent to strengthen and build the church there as he had done in Crete.³

In 2 Corinthians 7:5-7, Paul wrote: "For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within. But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus..." These words Paul wrote reveal the great comfort brought by Titus to Paul previously. In fact Paul's joy was greater than ever because of the encouragement brought by Titus in the middle of such tremendous discouragement. Each of us would do

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“LAST WORDS!”-2 TIMOTHY 4:9-11A

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well to consider these words written and kind actions demonstrated by the faithful life of Titus.

May we too be mindful of those hurting lives that cross our path so we might bring this cheerful encouragement each day to the lives of those around us. And may we purposefully go out of our way to intersect the paths of those who are hurting in order to hearten and bring such cheer.

C. “ONLY LUKE IS WITH ME”- 2 TIMOTHY 4:11A

Rome was a place of brutal persecution and turmoil for believers during Nero’s reign. Because of that, many Christians fled. Any who dared remain were in constant danger. With Paul, as their leader thrown in prison and awaiting imminent death by execution for his faith, who would be left to carry on the work of ministry in Rome and around the world?

Paul speaks of another faithful companion who had travelled perhaps thousands of miles, over years of missionary journeys, a faithful coworker and laborer in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was with Paul during his first imprisonment, never leaving his side even though Demas deserted. And he was there throughout Paul’s second and final imprisonment in Rome. This faithful man was Luke the physician.

Luke was a tough friend for tough times and he was used by the Holy Spirit to chronicle the life of Christ in the Gospel of Luke, the longest of all four Gospels. He also recorded the history of the church from the very beginning in the book of Acts! Luke is only mentioned by name three times (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, 2 Timothy 4:11) in the New Testament because he used first person, plural pronouns, and he was the only Gentile writer in the entire New Testament.

Luke was beloved by Paul and greatly used by God, yet he speaks little to nothing about himself in his writings. His life, his work and his mission was all about Christ. He devoted his life to proclaiming, preaching and recording Jesus Christ for all who would come after that we might know the Truth, receive the Truth and proclaim the Truth as well! Luke was a devoted friend and tremendous coworker of Paul’s. This is who remained with Paul.

Think about it. Just one shipwreck or arrest and imprisonment would make any of us quit and say I didn’t sign up for this. Be honest. If you know Jesus Christ and have surrendered your life to him, will you remain faithful in the midst of adversity? Persecution for true faith in Christ in our country is just around the corner.

¹MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.206.

²Platte, David; Akin, Daniel L.; Merida, Tony, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. B&H Publishing Group: Nashville, Tennessee, 2013. Pg.218.

³MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.208.